

WHAT IS MSAR?

The Massachusetts System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (MSAR), a preparedness program sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), is a statewide secure database of pre-credentialed health care professionals who are interested in volunteering their services in the event of a public health emergency.

Over the past several years it has become apparent that during a large-scale disaster such as an act of terrorism, a hurricane, an earthquake, or an infectious epidemic, coordinating a medical response is a great challenge. The best way to mitigate this challenge is to have a system in place that can identify and deploy registered, pre-credentialed medical volunteers. MSAR is such a system.

Volunteers can register with MSAR by visiting the website at www.mass.gov/MSAR. Once there, participants are asked to complete the MSAR application, which includes questions pertaining to education, training, and disaster-related experience. Primary source verification is utilized to confirm all credentialing elements. Volunteers are required to successfully complete the MSAR online orientation, a course that also provides valuable continuing education credits for physicians and nurses.

MSAR can be activated only by the Commissioner of the MDPH or his or her designee in the event of a public health emergency. Upon activation, an alert message will be sent to all MSAR members or a limited pool of members, depending on the size, type, location, and specific needs of the incident.

Registering with MSAR does not obligate a volunteer to respond. It is understood that family, professional, or other commitments may prevent an individual from responding to an MSAR activation.

